



## Modern Ambivalence

*by Jennifer Aikman*

Do not hold the baby

An opiate

breeds in its honey-straw smell  
in the folds of its apricot ears

It activates the love-longing  
the nurture-needing

Body ripe

the breasts and womb cry out  
in barren-angry strength

The warmth, the weight, the nuzzle in the neck  
brings alive the ache  
beckons with mock innocence  
shames the torrid preparations for career

Do not hold the baby

Beyond the cradle  
lies activity not passivity  
self-hood not servitude  
the world in possibilities  
This wind-dancing independence  
quick aborted  
with new life  
so utterly demanding  
so completely selfish  
so totally bewitching

Do not hold the baby

The modern impulse  
soon is squelched  
the velvet skin wants stroking  
the heartbeats reach for oneness  
Then to resist  
an act of Will  
the pain of Won't  
to surrender the little life  
deprives  
and tears and drills the heart

do not hold the baby